

The President's Daily Brief

June 29, 1976

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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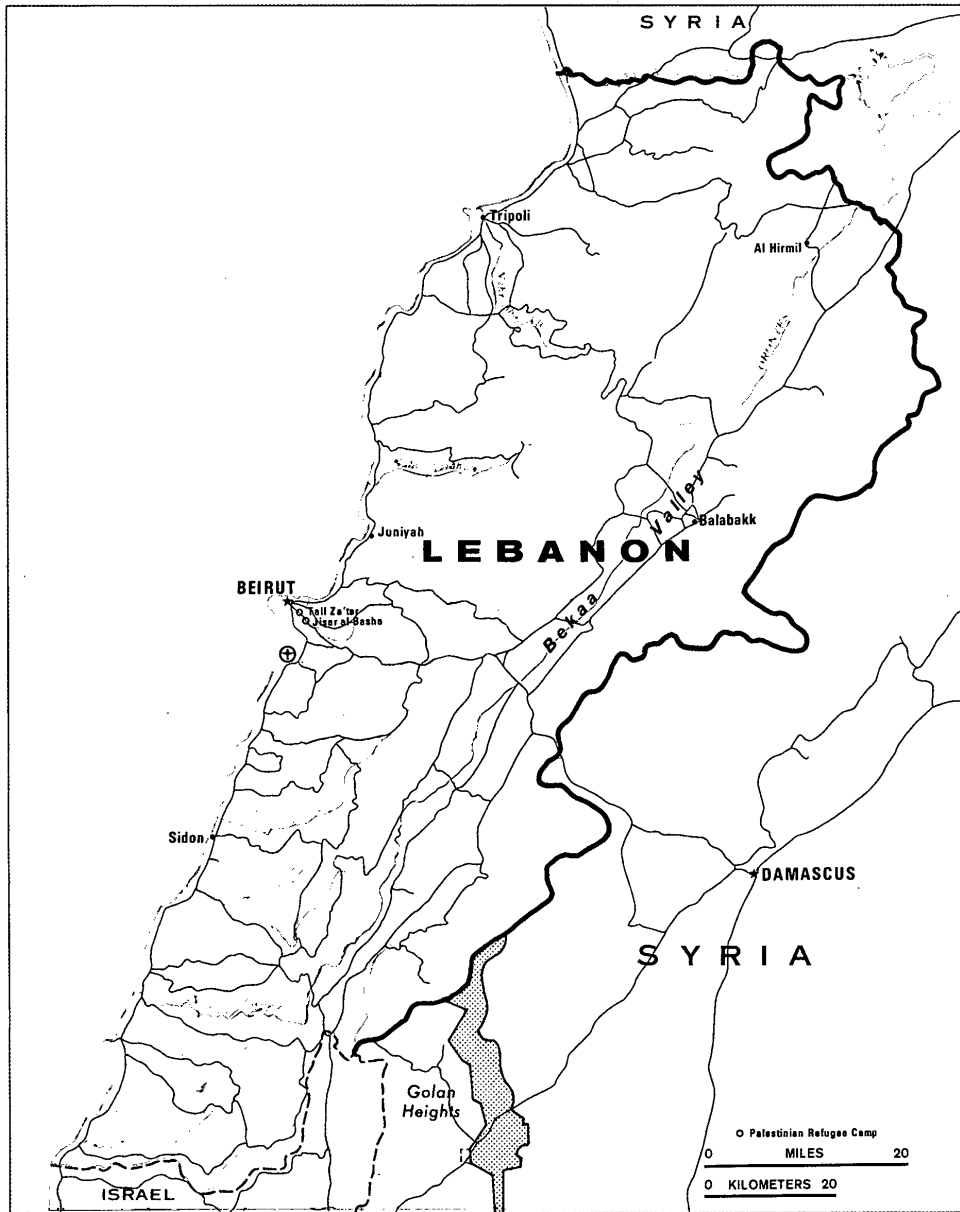
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LEBANON: *Christian forces regrouped yesterday and resumed their assault on the Tall Zatar and Jisr al-Basha refugee camps on the eastern edge of Beirut.*

The Christians expect the camps to fall by the end of the week at the latest. Muslim and Palestinian forces, meanwhile, continued their diversionary attacks in Beirut's port area and the Christian suburbs, possibly in preparation for a direct attempt to break through and lift the siege of the camps.

The Beirut airport remains closed, but the small Sudanese contingent and the balance of the Saudi contingent of the Arab League force are likely to arrive in Beirut today, presumably overland from Damascus.

The Christians' prospects for a military success in Beirut have heightened Palestinian frustration and despair.

Lebanese leftist and fedayeen leaders lashed out at Damascus yesterday in a statement accusing the Syrians of conspiring with the Christians to bring about the camps' destruction and of deliberately delaying their withdrawal from the outskirts of Beirut and Sidon.

A Palestinian spokesman also accused the Syrians of moving 4,000 additional troops, plus armor, into northern Lebanon yesterday. Although we have not yet confirmed any such moves, Syrian forces have tried to tighten their grip on the northern part of the Bekaa Valley over the past few days. Leftist forces in Balabakk are on the verge of giving up.

The Christian siege of the refugee camps has stalled Libyan Prime Minister Jallud's efforts to achieve a cease-fire.

Jallud conferred with leftist and Palestinian leaders in Beirut yesterday, but later canceled a scheduled meeting with Christian leaders when they refused to break off their attack on Tall Zatar. For

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their part, the Christians have become more skeptical of Libyan mediation. The Christians say they have found several Libyan bodies and taken a Libyan prisoner in recent fighting in Beirut.

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IRAQ-SYRIA: There are no signs that any of the Iraqi forces in western Iraq are preparing to return to their home garrisons.

Baghdad still has at least 16 combat brigades along key approaches to Syria, and they could move to the border with little or no warning. The Iraqis have stated that unless Damascus permits their troops to cross the border to form a "northern front" against Israel, they will hold training exercises--before they eventually return to their regular bases.

The Iraqis recognize that the buildup on the border has not succeeded in reducing Syrian pressure against the Palestinians and Lebanese leftists. Baghdad's actions, however, have forced the Syrians to move military units toward the Iraqi border. The Iraqis also believe that the continuing threat of a push into Syria will increase domestic criticism of President Assad's Lebanon policy.

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JORDAN-USSR: *King Husayn may have run into difficulties during his visit to the USSR, which ended yesterday.*

General Secretary Brezhnev's apparent failure to meet with Husayn suggests that Moscow may have been unhappy that the King was not prepared to decide on a Soviet offer of an air defense system. The joint communique issued yesterday obscures Soviet and Jordanian differences on key Middle East issues and gives no indication of the Soviets' terms for such a system. The Soviets, however, probably did make a serious offer.

Husayn apparently followed through with his plan to return home to compare the Soviet proposal with existing or anticipated Western offers.

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If the Saudis do provide \$500 million, Husayn would be able to purchase the first part of a US Hawk system or a joint US-UK system. The US-UK package, however, would provide significantly fewer batteries than the minimum the Jordanians believe they need. In addition, Husayn may consider those systems inferior to the one offered by the Soviets.

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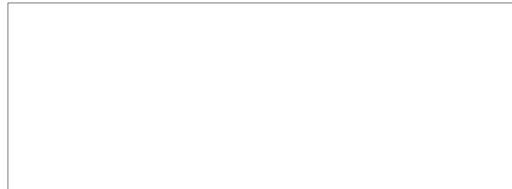
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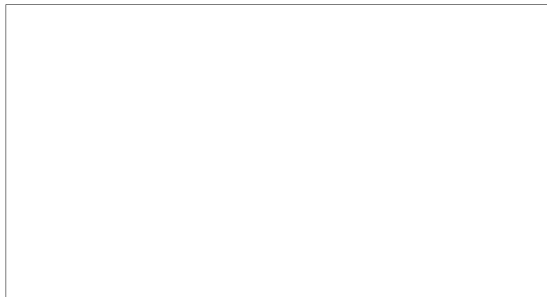


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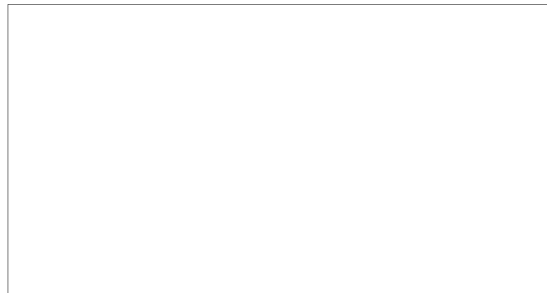
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PORTUGAL: *President-elect Eanes yesterday indicated an intention to centralize power in his own hands by holding the posts of both president and armed forces chief of staff until the political situation "stabilizes."*

Eanes has promised that his first priority as president will be to establish a strong government that would not be vulnerable to militant pressure groups. He reiterated his campaign pledge to designate Socialist Party leader Mario Soares to form a government.

The candidate of the far left, Otelo de Carvalho, who finished second with 17 percent of the vote, has announced the formation of a congress of far left groups that supported his campaign.

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The Communist Party--the principal loser in the election with under 8 percent of the count--is likely to maintain a low profile while reviewing party strategy. The Communists retain considerable strength in the labor unions, however, and their losses to activists on the far left may prompt the party to decide on a tough line toward the new government.

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USSR-EUROPE: Most signs point to little or no controversy at the conference of European communist parties in East Berlin today and tomorrow.

General Secretary Brezhnev and President Tito will join representatives of all European communist parties except those of Iceland and Albania. To assure the attendance of independent-minded parties like the Italian, Romanian, Yugoslav, and French ones, the Soviets apparently granted extensive concessions.

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[redacted] the conference document will focus on such non-divisive issues as peace, security, cooperation and social progress in Europe.

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[redacted] the proceedings and the document will strictly observe the full independence and autonomy of the participating parties and call for sharply expanded cooperation among communist parties and all "progressive" forces in Europe, including the Social and Christian Democrats.

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